In the discussion which followed, Mr. Fitter's ideas were supported by Mr. Jack Livingstone, while Mr. Roger Tory Peterson pointed out that there was little harm to the species in shooting a vagrant, apart from its aesthetic value, as it would be unlikely to survive in any case. Dr. Ian Nisbet ("British Birds" Rarities Committee) supported this view in special circumstances, such as the shooting of the pochard x tufted duck hybrid, where one of a group was being collected and he felt that the American oriole ringed on Bardsay Island should have been collected, as it remains unidentified. Mr. H. G. Alexander (B.O.U. Records Committee) stressed the great skill with present day field identification, but quoted the problem of the Fair Isle western sandpiper, which was wrongly identified, although examined in the hand by himself and Mr. Kenneth Williamson, for Dr. Nisbet now considered it was a western sandpiper, whereas it was originally recorded as a semi-palmated sandpiper. Mr. Max Nicholson spoke of the excellent work done by both the B.O.U. Records Committee and the "British Birds" Rarities Committee. He did not support Mr. Fitter's ideas for changes in the official List, while Mr. C. J. O. Harrison thought that the use of the List results in some absurdities in the law. Dr. James Harrison strongly disapproved of the rejection of the "Hastings records", stating that as a boy he had seen a rujous warbler in his garden at Hastings and three days later, the bird being mounted in George Bristow's shop. He could see no point now in doubting the word of well-known ornithologists, who investigated those records at the time, particularly in view of the many rarities identified in the same area since the last war.

Dwarfism in a Pheasant

by J. S. Ash

Received 5th November, 1960

A very small cock Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) in its first winter plumage was recently sent to me by D. J. Cowen, Esq. It had been shot on about 24th October, 1960 at Oundle, Northamptonshire. Except for its small size and light weight, the bird was normal; there was no sign of the emaciation which is characteristic of most birds having a low body weight, there were good deposits of subcutaneous fat, and there was no evidence of disease or injury. Except for a post-mortem change in colour, the testes were normal in appearance.

As the condition of dwarfism is apparently extremely rare in birds, it is of interest to compare a few of its standard measurements with those given in *The Handbook*. The weights are taken from Blank and Ash (in preparation):—

	Measurements in mm.	
	The Handbook	*Oundle bird*
Wing	235–260	219
Tarsus	60–78	50
Bill (from feathers)	28–32	26
Tail (central)	420–520	419
Weight	1394 gms.*	510.3 gms.

* average of 1668 wild first-winter cocks, range 850.5–2069.6 gms.

On the basis of wing moult, the bird was between 15 and 16 weeks of age.

As far as I know, the presence of the growth hormone has not been demonstrated in the pituitary of birds: although hypophysectomy retards the growth of birds, this does not mean that the retardation is specifically due to the absence of the growth hormone. Unfortunately, decomposition was too advanced in the present specimen to permit an examination of the region of the pituitary.

Landauer (1929) has described in detail a case of thyrogenous dwarfism (*Myxoedema infantilis*) in the domestic fowl. This was 'proportionate'

dwarfism comparable with dwarfism of a pathogenic origin in humans. The few measurements taken of the Oundle bird suggest, however, that this was a case of 'disproportionate' dwarfism, and the causal factor should perhaps be sought elsewhere. This example is probably more closely parallelled by the dwarf *Larus* "*capistratus*" variety of the Black-headed Gull (*L. ridibundus*) discussed by Hazelwood and Harrison (1953).

References:
Blank, T. H. and J. S. Ash (in preparation). Body weights of Pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*), Red-legged Partridges (*Alectoris rufa*) and Partridges *Perdix perdix*).
Hazelwood, A. and J. M. Harrison (1953). A Note on *Larus* "*capistratus*" Temminck. Bull. Brit. Orn. Club. 73: 98–100.
Landauer, W. (1929). Thyrogenous dwarfism (*Myxoedema infantilis*) in the Domestic Fowl. Amer. J. Anat. 43: 1–44.

The Significance of some Plumage Phases of the House-Sparrow, *Passer domesticus* (Linnaeus) and the Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* Temminck*

PART ONE

by JAMES M. HARRISON

Received 2nd January, 1961

I. INTRODUCTION

The above research was prompted by the report of a meeting of the British Association in Bristol in 1955 when subsequently, in an article in *The Daily Telegraph* (3rd September, 1955), a claim was made by Robin Cormack, then a pupil at the Bristol Grammar School to the effect that the sexes of young House-Sparrows, *Passer domesticus domesticus* could be differentiated in the field by the presence in the males of a white, or pale spot behind the eye. In so far as this claim is concerned it may be said to have been substantiated by this investigation though, in the material examined by the writer, this character was not absolutely constant for in some individuals it was absent, in others unilateral only and in none did it seem to constitute a good field character; while these were the findings on the material for this paper, one cannot rule out the possibility that Cormack may have handled a population in which the white eye spots were apparently more pronounced.

The present study was suggested to me by Mr. J. D. Macdonald to whom I am indebted for the loan of the British Museum file with the original reference and certain correspondence.

Full juveniles of *P. domesticus* are sadly lacking in most collections, both public and private it would seem, and before any progress could be made at all it was necessary to collect and prepare specially some 70 specimens of positively, i.e. anatomically, sexed individuals to augment such other material as was available; in all about 100 juveniles came under review. The total material seen, i.e. birds of both sexes and all ages amounted to approximately 500. It must also be mentioned that unless meticulous care is taken in the preparation of the material, the white spots and other head characters can easily be effaced. In the course of these investigations it became apparent that there were other characters of very

*A Summary of this paper was read at the British Ornithologists' Union York Conference on 25th March, 1961.